

Leviticus 22 - Thursday, February 18th, 2010

In this chapter, Moses is to tell Aaron and his sons how to be consecrated and holy (whole). If they obeyed these specific commands from the Lord, they would be made to be Holy by the Lord. Disease (sin) would be cleansed by water (Word) and God would make them whole and acceptable to Him a Holy God. This is what it's like for us, if we will get into the bathtub (Word) He will bathe us, but He can't until we get into the scriptures first. Really wanting to get into the Word comes when we realize what comes out in our lives as a result of having been in the Word. When I see my life start to get blessed as a direct result of having been not just in the Bible, but also, with the God of the Bible, it makes want to read the Bible more.

22:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they do not profane My holy name by what they dedicate to Me: I am the LORD.³ Say to them: 'Whoever of all your descendants throughout your generations, who goes near the holy things which the children of Israel dedicate to the LORD, while he has uncleanness upon him, that person shall be cut off from My presence: I am the LORD.

- The Lord tells Moses to speak to Aaron and his sons regarding the need for them to be clean, pure and holy. It's an absolute must!
- So much so, that if at any time they as priests were to come into contact with anything that was unholy they would profane God's name.
- If anything deemed unclean defiled them, they were to be cut off from God's presence and were not allowed to perform priestly duties.

4 'Whatever man of the descendants of Aaron, who is a leper or has a discharge, shall not eat the holy offerings until he is clean. And whoever touches anything made unclean by a corpse, or a man who has had an emission of semen,

- Now, God is about to go into graphic detail about what makes a priest unclean and how they can't eat the holy things until they're clean.
- This is another of those places in God's Word that, at first glance, would seemingly have no application to us in the New Covenant.
- Actually, nothing could be further from the truth. This verse has profound application to us as it relates to our relationship with the Lord.

“He shall not eat of the holy things till he be clean.” - The holy things referred to here are the offerings made by Israel to Jehovah, a part of which was presented to God in fire, and the rest partaken of by the priests and their families. None, however, might feed on them whilst ceremonially unclean. This suggests some useful precautions for ourselves, if we would fully enjoy the privileges and blessings attending the worship of the holy God.

We must be clean before we can enjoy the private reading of the Word of God. — We would wash our hands, soiled with the dust and grime of toil, before opening an exquisitely printed copy of the Scriptures; how much more should we seek cleansing at the hands of Christ before we feed on the holy things of Scripture!

We must be clean before entering the House of God. — It is a holy habit for each intending worshipper to be quiet before leaving the house on the Lord's day; or to use carefully the moment of the bent head at the commencement of the public service, in order that the soul may be made clean from any contracted stain, and resolve henceforth to abstain from all evil.

We must be clean before partaking of the Lord's Supper. — There we feed upon the bread of God; and as we wash our hands before we sit at the table of a friend, so should our hearts be cleansed ere we partake of the emblems of the body and blood of Christ. Holiness becomes God's house. Those that ascend the hill of the Lord must have clean hands and a pure heart. The reason why religious exercises do not profit you, may lie in your failure to comply with this demand. "He shall not eat of the holy things until he be clean."

F.B. Meyer Devotionals on Leviticus (http://preceptaustin.org/leviticus_sermon_illustrations_2.htm)

5 or whoever touches any creeping thing by which he would be made unclean, or any person by whom he would become unclean, whatever his uncleanness may be --6 the person who has touched any such thing shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat the holy offerings unless he washes his body with water. 7 And when the sun goes down he shall be clean; and afterward he may eat the holy offerings, because it is his food.

- This may be one of the most encouraging passages in this chapter, and maybe amongst the most encouraging in the entire book.
- If and when they became unclean in any of these ways, it would not end their relationship with the Lord, or their service before the Lord.
- Their uncleanness would only be for that day, but at the beginning of a new day, which for them was at sunset, they are made clean

Lamentations 3:22-23 22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. NIV

8 Whatever dies naturally or is torn by beasts he shall not eat, to defile himself with it: I am the LORD. 9 They shall therefore keep My ordinance, lest they bear sin for it and die thereby, if they profane it: I the LORD sanctify them.

- Again, God goes into great detail about what makes a priest unclean and defiled when He talks about staying away from dead animals.
- It's important to understand that they were constantly surrounded by livestock and wild animals, so this was a serious issue for them.
- Notice God says; "if they profane it: I the Lord sanctify them." In other words Christian, when we are made unclean, He makes us clean.

10'No outsider shall eat the holy offering; one who dwells with the priest, or a hired servant, shall not eat the holy thing.11 But if the priest buys a person with his money, he may eat it; and one who is born in his house may eat his food.12 If the priest's daughter is married to an outsider, she may not eat of the holy offerings.13 But if the priest's daughter is a widow or divorced, and has no child, and has returned to her father's house as in her youth, she may eat her father's food; but no outsider shall eat it.

- This is interesting because God makes provisions and allowances for specific situations as it relates to their slaves as family members.
- In other words, if a priest buys a servant, they may eat of the priest's food. However, there were instances when they could not partake.

14'And if a man eats the holy offering unintentionally, then he shall restore a holy offering to the priest, and add one-fifth to it.15 They shall not profane the holy offerings of the children of Israel, which they offer to the LORD,16 or allow them to bear the guilt of trespass when they eat their holy offerings; for I the LORD sanctify them."

- In the event that someone unintentionally partook of the holy offering, they could make restitution by adding one-fifth to the offering.
- This was because only the priest and their families could partake of the income from the offerings given to the Lord in the Tabernacle.

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,18 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them:'Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, who offers his sacrifice for any of his vows or for any of his freewill offerings, which they offer to the LORD as a burnt offering --19 you shall offer of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats.20 Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf.21 And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, to fulfill his vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it.22 Those that are blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the LORD.23 Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer as a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted. 24'You shall not offer to the LORD what is bruised or crushed, or torn or cut; nor shall you make any offering of them in your land.25 Nor from a foreigner's hand shall you offer any of these as the bread of your God, because their corruption is in them, and defects are in them. They shall not be accepted on your behalf."

- This is addressed to all the children of Israel because God wants them to know that they are only to give the best offerings to Him.
- Here, He forbids them to bring offerings that have any blemish, defect, or disease, because they will be unacceptable before the Lord.
- This clearly demonstrates that God is greedy and only wants to hoard the best for Himself leaving us what's leftover and worthless. Not!

- I would be grossly remiss to not expound more on this before we move on to verse 26, because this is a problem in the church today.
- In the church today we've been led to believe that God needs us to give to Him. Not only does He need the best, He needs the most.
- This is why it's so vital that we know the "why" behind the "what" of God's Word. Remember, the theme of Leviticus is Holiness.

- Throughout this book He tells us to be holy because He Himself is holy. He wants us to imitate Him, not the un-holiness of the world.
- If we are imitating Him in His holiness, then it will be marked by a holy life of giving to Him, because of what He has already given us.
- Show me a Christian who gives and I'll show you a Christian who is godly and holy in their Christ-likeness because they imitate Him.

- What's really sad about this is that the Israelites did end up defiling the altar by bringing the lame and sick sacrifices before the Lord.

Malachi 1:7-8 7 "You place defiled food on my altar. "But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?' "By saying that the LORD's table is contemptible. 8 When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty. NIV

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 27 "When a bull or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall be seven days with its mother; and from the Eighth day and thereafter it shall be accepted as an offering made by fire to the LORD. 28 Whether it is a cow or ewe, do not kill both her and her young on the same day. 29 And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, offer it of your own free will. 30 On the same day it shall be eaten; you shall leave none of it until morning: I am the LORD.

- Not only did the sacrifice have to be at least eight days old, it had to be eaten all in the same day as a freewill thanksgiving offering.
- This begs the question of why God would put such restrictions on this particular thanksgiving offering. Consider the following:
- First, this speaks of Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice rising from the dead on the eighth day, or the first day of the week if you prefer.
- Second, this speaks to us in the sense that it's our freewill offering of thanksgiving and that it can't be made with any leftovers.

31 "Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I am the LORD. 32 You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel. I am the LORD who sanctifies you, 33 who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD."

- Here the Lord is sort of sums it all up by once again telling them the "why" behind the "what" of His commandments. It's for our good.
- In other words, this is what I am commanding you to do, and this is why I am commanding you to do it. I want you to be like me.
- I want to end this chapter a little differently than we have in the past, in that I would like to look more closely at why we need to be Holy.

1. Being holy makes me clean before God (Verses 1-8)

- ❑ They are cut off from God and wouldn't eat till the next day when they washed the "running issue" with water.
- ✓ We are cut off from God and can't eat of His Word until we wash our "sin" with the water through the Word.

2. Being holy makes me embrace the grace of God (Verses 9-16)

- ❑ They were allowed to partake, not the unauthorized outsider until payment or restitution was made adding 1/5.
- ✓ It's by God's grace (#5) that I am allowed to partake because of the payment He made for the penalty of my sin.

3. Being holy makes me enter into fellowship with God (Verses 17-25)

- ❑ The fellowship offering was offered as a freewill offering, and it had to be without defect to be acceptable.
- ✓ Fellowship with God is offered to us if we by our freewill are in Christ who without sin made us acceptable.

4. Being holy makes me completely thankful to God (Verses 26-33)

- ❑ Before sacrificing a "thank offering" it had to remain for seven days. It was acceptable after the eighth day.
- ✓ God makes me holy and acceptable by completely (#7) forgiving me and giving me a new beginning (#8).

Three times in this chapter God declares; "I am the Lord, who makes you holy". 1 John 1:9 promises that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. How does He clean us and make us whole? By the "Word of God", because the "Word is God" (John 1:1), and has come to live in us (John 1:14). The Holy Spirit of God in us makes us holy (whole), but it doesn't make us God. It does however make us like God as He conforms us into the image of Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:29)